

Letters About Literature
Library of Congress
Writing Contest for Young Readers

Objective: Write a personal letter to an author you admire, or an author of a book (fiction or nonfiction) that inspired you. Your letter must be personal but persuasive, explain just how the author's work changed your view of yourself or your world. Your letter should be at least 100 words and no more than 500 words.

Directions:

1. Select a fiction or nonfiction book you have read and about which you have strong feelings. Explore those feelings and why you reacted the way you did during or after reading the author's work. Consider these questions when writing your letter:

- What did the book show you about your world that you never noticed before?
- What did you realize about yourself as a result of reading this book?
- Why was this work meaningful to you?
- How do you know the author's work influenced you?

2. Write a persuasive letter stating your opinion and supporting that opinion with specific details. Write honestly and in your own voice, as if you were having a conversation with the author. Keep in mind these two tips:

- Correspond (Communicate), don't compliment!
- Do not summarize the book's plot! The author wrote the book and knows what happened. What the author doesn't know is how the book affected you and why it did so. Only YOU can explain that unique relationship you experienced while reading the book.

3. You must complete this assignment. It is a project worth 17 points. You are strongly encouraged to submit your letter to the state level contest. We have had a third-place winner and 21 finalists in the last two years! To have your letter submitted, complete the LAL 2015 Entry Coupon and have your parent or guardian sign it and return it to Ms. Davis.

Assignment Timeline

Monday, January 5

- Homework: Brainstorming and Preparation Sheet

Tuesday, January 6 (Mini-Lesson Focus: Corresponding and Synthesizing in Writing)

- Start/Finish Planning (in class)
- Begin writing letter (in class)—if you plan to submit this letter for the competition, it must be typed on the computer.

Wednesday, January 7 (Mini-Lesson Focus: Elements of Persuasive Narrative Writing)

- Write and finish letter (in class)

If you do not finish your draft letter in class on Wednesday, you **must** sign up to complete it in tutorial on **Wednesday (1/7)** or **Thursday (1/8)**. **Any draft received after tutorial on 1/8 will be marked late and will not receive credit for the daily assignment.**

Monday, January 12 (Mini-Lesson Focus: The Editing Process)

- Self-Edit and revise your letter*

If you do not finish your letter in class on Monday, you **must** sign up to complete the letter in tutorial on **Monday (1/12)** or **Tuesday (1/13)**. **Any letter received after tutorial on 1/13 will be marked late.** Per the homework code at Latin, for every day a project is late, the grade will be lowered by **one full letter grade**.

How do I submit my work?

You have two options for submitting your work so that it is **on time**:

1. Print out a copy at home or in the library and submit it in class on time.
2. Come to tutorial after school and request that I print it out for you.

*****Requests in class, in handwritten notes, or Google sharing do not count as turning your assignment in on time for this assignment. *****

All entries will be assessed on the following criteria:

*Exposition –the writer’s use of language skills, organization, and grammar.	0	1	2	3	4	5
*Content – the writer’s achievement in addressing the contest theme, including concrete details that support your statements and/or arguments.	0	1	2	3	4	5
*Writer’s Voice – the writer’s style and originality of expression.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Evidence of the Writing Process – the writer submits his or her planning sheets, rough draft, and final draft on the day that it is due.	0	1	2			

Each criteria will be scored on a scale of zero (0) to five (5), where five (5) is excellent and zero (0) is not fulfilling the judging criteria.

* Criteria used by the official Letters About Literature judging panel